talion, the standard 1:50,000-scale map does not always provide the detail the S-2 needs, especially during the orders planning process or aviation unit briefings. The S-2 uses all available resources to track the battle more accurately and provide the proper terrain information to all personnel. These resources include 1:25,000-scale maps, sectional map blowups, land satellite photography, and aerial imagery.

The S-2, or other responsible individual, must debrief all possible intelligence sources on the battlefield. He must include the assets that are not normally considered prime collectors. Medics, convoy drivers, aviators, ADA teams, infantry patrols, and scouts can all provide pieces of the picture. These groups or individuals see many things on the battlefield that they may not recognize as valuable until they are asked specific questions.

The most important aspect of developing battlefield intelligence may be reporting and dissemination. Timely, accurate, and complete reports on the enemy (SALUTE format—size, activity, location, unit, time, equipment) are essential to the commander. Without them, he cannot properly influence the battle. Often the initial contact reports are incomplete; tactical operations centers, leaders, and radio telephone operators must be ruthless in following up on them as the situation stabilizes. Just as important as accurate reporting is timely dissemination from the TOC to the intelligence collectors. Once the enemy target is pinpointed, reporting and dissemination allow the commander to implement his plan to attack and destroy it.

In summary, if the battalion is to succeed in destroying an enemy force during the search and attack, it must first succeed in finding the enemy. This means using all its available assets, including maneuver forces in the reconnaissance mode. The entire staff must be involved in the IPB process. The unit must first identify a target point where it can exploit an enemy vulnerability and then develop and implement an R&S plan that pinpoints this target. Finally, the unit must accurately report all information to the TOC for analysis and dissemination. This processed information is fed back to the collectors, and the R&S plan is updated. During the search and attack, intelligence is a slow methodical process that, if properly approached, gives the commander the best opportunity to destroy the critical enemy nodes and allows him to dictate the course of the battle.

The S-2 develops a plan to find the enemy and ensures that the units report all information to the TOC, where the true analysis takes place. Dissemination of information down to the users is equally crucial; it becomes the final payoff for the S-2. Attention to detail is the S-2's key ally while conducting the search and attack.

Through a successful training plan, the entire battalion becomes proficient in the orders development process, R&S planning, battle tracking, reporting, and dissemination. As part of this training plan the entire staff must exercise these skills during all training events until they become second nature. This ensures that the battalion will properly conduct intelligence operations in its search and attack missions. Although these intelligence operations are difficult, the S-2 can ensure a successful mission by applying the current published doctrine to the METT-T factors and continually developing the battlefield as more information becomes available.

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To the New Mortar Platoon Leader

LIEUTENANT DOUGLAS A. OLLIVANT

The transition from light infantry rifle platoon leader to mortar platoon leader is one of the most difficult job progressions for a lieutenant. He must go from company operations to battalion, from direct fire to indirect, from dismounted movement to mounted, and from combat operations to combat support. Unfortunately, most lieutenants moving into this job are poorly prepared, even if they are school trained, and very few commanders have the mortar experience to serve as mentor for them.

If you are one of these lieutenants, I would like to share some quick lessons from my experience that should at least point you in the right direction.

During my tenure as a mortar platoon leader, I found the following five areas critical: tactical proficiency, technical proficiency, fire direction center (FDC) operations, maintenance, and staff integration.

Tactical Proficiency. Mortar platoon tactics differ a great deal from those used in a rifle platoon. Essentially, a mortar platoon has only three maneu-

ver missions that can be considered mission essential tasks: move mounted, reconnoiter a firing position, and occupy a firing position.

Moving mounted may be a new experience for you. Getting lost for the first time in a HMMWV (high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) is embarrassing for a light infantry lieutenant who thinks mounted navigation is the same as dismounted navigation. Because of the Army's policy of rotating company-grade officers through both light and heavy assignments, your company commander should have extensive experience in mounted operations. Ask him about convoy procedures, movement orders, actions at halts, and mounted battle drills. These skills are extremely important, because a mortar platoon is not only difficult to control while moving but also especially vulnerable to attack.

A new mortar platoon leader is often confused when occupying a firing position the first few times. I found that the best way to think of it was as a patrol base that happened to have overhead clearance. With this analogy in mind, you will find the reconnaissance of a tentative firing position easy: Stop the vehicles 300 meters short; leave a security element with a contingency plan; take a second security element forward; have them clear and confirm the firing position; leave the second security element at the position with a contingency plan; return to pick up your vehicles; move in; and prepare the firing position.

The makeup of your reconnaissance party may vary. You can take an ammunition bearer from each gun, an entire gun squad with its tube, or even an entire section. I used each of these techniques at different times, depending upon the analysis of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time). Just be sure to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each option, given the enemy situation and the range to the FLOT (forward line of own troops). Always keep with you an FDC representative with a mortar computer or plotting board.

Once in a firing position, plan for the next displacement, reconnoitering tentative positions if possible. Then be sure to disseminate your emergency displacement plan. Finally, don't forget to inspect your systems, checking the gun line for sights, poles, ammunition, mask or overhead clearance, and priority target data. Then check the FDC for computer records, data sheets, ammunition count, and, above all, the situation map. If your FDC isn't tracking the battle as well as or better than the tactical operations center (TOC), something is wrong.

Technical Proficiency. As the mortar platoon leader, you must quickly gain proficiency as a mortarman, both in FDC procedures and in basic gunner skills. Fortunately, the Infantry Mortar Leader's Course does a good job in this area. If you have not completed the course, you need to attend as soon as possible. You won't learn a great deal about mortar tactics in the course, but you will become fully qualified in FDC operations, perhaps better than many of the platoon's noncommissioned officers.

Fire direction is the heart of what makes a mortarman and the most critical skill for your unit. You may be able to move all over the battlefield and communicate with everyone else, but if you can't plot where the round will land, you are useless to your commander. What this means to you as the platoon leader is that you must devote time to training on FDC skills, both for the FDC personnel and for the platoon as a whole. This comes hard for an infantry leader, because FDC work is done in a classroom with paper, pencils, and computers. Let your FDC chief train his section. You'll be glad you did when your FDC is able to fly through nonstandard missions.

Crew drill is your unit's second most critical skill. The infantrymen in contact expect a mortar round to land on target very soon after they call for it, and a mortar crew must practice often to maintain this standard. (I wish I had had my gunners perform this drill more often.) After about a year, your best gunners will be able to beat "expert" time consistently, given gunner exam conditions—that is, flat ground. But see that your gunners also drill on less-than-perfect terrain. Gunners who score "expert" on a flat grassy field won't necessarily make the time on muddy, rocky ground in the training area. Don't forget your assistant gunners. If the crew can work well together and develop a rhythm, they will consistently get the rounds out in time.

Fire Direction Center. Your FDC is the nerve center of the platoon. It directs and controls the conduct of fires, tracks the battle, maintains communication with higher headquarters and the guns, monitors position security, sends reports, and is prepared to assume control of the battle as the alternate TOC (or second alternate) at any time.

As an infantry lieutenant, you may never have seen anything like an FDC before and may be mystified as to how to use these soldiers, either in the field or in garrison. The FDC contains the platoon's second most senior NCO and two junior NCOs. Like me, you may have difficulty at first deciding how best to use these leaders.

Your FDC chief can make life easy for you if you let him. He can serve as an assistant platoon sergeant (similar to the squad leader in the Ranger Course). Be sure to keep him in the planning loop. With his two NCOs and, hopefully, some of the better soldiers in the platoon, he is ideally suited to handle your special projects. In short, don't ignore this valuable NCO just because you didn't have one as a line platoon leader.

In the field, your platoon sergeant

should have his hands full with resupply operations and helping you inspect the gun line. As a result, the FDC chief may have to help perform other duties normally assigned to the platoon sergeant. This is a good role for him and for you—it takes work off your shoulders and also allows him to exercise his leadership talents. But don't allow this role to compromise the operation of the FDC or to cause friction between the FDC chief and the platoon sergeant.

In addition to the obvious tasks of fire direction and maintaining the ammunition count, the FDC team must be able to clear their own fires when the fire support element is unable to perform its mission. The team must therefore know where every friendly unit is on the battlefield. Maintaining the status of the line platoons is fairly easy—just call the forward observer (FO) working with each platoon on the fire net and get a location, and have him update you when the position changes. Scout squads are harder. You get their locations from the S-2 or drop to their radio net. I worked out a plan with the scout platoon leader to have him enter my net every so often to update me on his squads' locations.

Trying to get locations for the various support slice elements is a tremendous task. Even the TOC has trouble tracking the air defense artillery teams, the military intelligence assets, the long-range surveillance detachment teams, the Special Forces operational "A" detachments, and the Marine supporting arms liaison teams traversing the battlefield. Your FDC team must aggressively track down every element, and you should train them not to take "No" or "I don't know" for an answer. Although this is a constant and frustrating battle, winning it will pay great rewards in preventing fratricide and in rapid responses to calls for fire.

Maintenance. Maintenance will consume a great deal of your platoon's time. Gone are the days when you could spend maintenance day cleaning your rifle, protective mask, and night observation devices, and call it quits. You are now responsible for at least six HMMWVs, four M252 mortar systems, and more communications equipment than you will know what to do with at first.

Motor maintenance is thoroughly covered in other publications and in most unit SOPs. Be sure to establish a good relationship with the headquarters company (HHC) executive officer/battalion motor officer and his maintenance team. You are responsible for getting your vehicle running. Motor pool personnel are there to help you, but you must become expert at checking equipment and reading maintenance indicators.

The best maintenance indicator for your mortar system is the DA Form 2408-4, Weapon Record Data, and it should accompany the mortar system on all live fires and deployments. The first entry to check is the last borescope/pullover date. A borescope/pullover is required at least every six months. My platoon SOP directed us to borescope before every live fire, just to make sure we were current. Second, ensure that all rounds fired from the tube are being recorded accurately, in the appropriate block, and in a timely manner. Finally, ensure that the form is being closed out and forwarded to Watervliet Arsenal every six months for filing (every 12 months for reserve component units). If this form is being well maintained, you can probably be assured that your platoon is keeping good maintenance records.

Communications maintenance is generally spotty among mortar platoons. I always had the radios in my command HMMWV and the FDC truck either working or turned in for maintenance. But I don't th' ever convinced my squad leaders of .ie importance of radio maintenance. You have to take a personal interest in all your communications assets. Make sure all radios will function in the red and green (nonsecure and secure) modes, mounted and dismounted. Set up and inventory your antennas. The mortar platoon will be operating over extended distances and on rough terrain much of the time, and your antennas will give you the range to carry out your mission.

As the mortar platoon leader, you have a long hand receipt. You need to become proficient in all of this equipment as soon as possible and learn the maintenance indicators. You should be able to set up and use every piece of equipment that you own.

Staff Integration. When you were a rifle platoon leader, life in the field was pretty simple. You got your orders from your company commander, who was your rating officer, and executed them under his guidance. But as the mortar platoon leader, you may go through entire combat training center rotations without even seeing your rating officer, the HHC commander. You must establish quickly who your boss is in the field, who must have input from you, and who will help take care of your unit.

The staff officer most important to you is the battalion fire support officer (FSO). Coordination with him is critical for many reasons:

First, all the forward observers and company FSOs work for him. This means he controls every subscriber to your radio net except you. I took advantage of this arrangement by having the FSO set up fire support team meetings in which I briefed the way the mortars intended to conduct their fires and heard the unit forward observers' questions and complaints about mortar fires. This face-to-face coordination with the men on the ground went a long way toward facilitating calls for fire during our rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC).

Second, the battalion FSO is always either at the TOC or out with the tactical command post, standing next to the battalion commander and the S-3. Since you always have a link to the FSO on the fire support net, you should be able to get situation reports and other messages into command channels through him when the command net is too busy (which it generally is). If you and the FSO have a good working relationship, this link can be a very useful one. During my JRTC rotation, I was unable to communicate for long on either the command net or the administrative/logistical net. I passed all my radio traffic, situation reports, resupply requests, and even fragmentary orders and situation updates through the FSO on the fire net.

Third, the FSO serves as an information link through which you can introduce ideas into the planning process. The FSO

is the commander's primary advisor on indirect fire, but he generally does not know as much about mortar fires and mortar positioning as you do. Push this information through him so it ends up in the order; otherwise, the assistant S-3 actually writing the order may put you where you can't be effective.

My links with the S-3 were considerably weaker than those with the FSO, but he is still an important staff officer. He is ultimately responsible for all training and operations within the battalion. Again, his knowledge of mortars is likely to be either dated or nonexistent, and it is in your best interest to educate him. You must resolve two significant issues with him—who controls your emplacement and whether you can displace under your own authority (or must get battalion level approval). There are no doctrinal answers to these questions; they tend to depend upon the personalities involved. Be sure that you and the S-3 reach an understanding regarding these issues.

In a light infantry battalion, logistical assets are limited and not suited to carrying such heavy items as mortar ammunition. Detailed coordination with the S-4 and support platoon leader regarding ammunition resupply will be a great help to you in the field. Without it, you'll find yourself sending your platoon sergeant off alone in a HMMWV in quest of mortar rounds.

Your level of contact with the battalion commander will vary with his command and his interest in mortar fires. I was fortunate enough to have a commander who had been a mortar platoon leader. He therefore saw me as *his* mortar platoon leader and kept his door open to me regarding mortar issues. Not all my counterparts in other battalions enjoyed this luxury. Again, education is the key. If your battalion commander does not fully understand your capabilities, demonstrate them to him. If you take some time in garrison to sell yourself to the commander, you may find your mortars used more in the field.

There is no way to avoid the culture shock involved in taking over a mortar platoon. But a quick education will go a long way in helping you employ your valuable asset effectively. Mortars continue to exist because, if properly used, they can provide accurate and responsive indirect fires to the battalion. The charge to you, the lieutenant on the ground, is to make that happen.

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The Leader's Reconnaissance

An Argument Against It

CAPTAIN KEVIN J. DOUGHERTY

"The leader's reconnaissance," according to Field Manual (FM) 7-10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, "is crucial to every operation." At least one previous article in INFANTRY also touted personal reconnaissance as "the most important combat multiplier a commander or leader has at his disposal." ("Personal Reconnaissance," by Captain Joseph Votel, INFANTRY, March-April 1988, p. 33.)

I disagree with these assessments. I believe that the ad hoc nature of the leader's reconnaissance violates several principles of war and that the same intent could be achieved more effectively by a habitually organized small unit.

FM 7-10 cautions that "only essential personnel should take part" in a leader's reconnaissance. But who, exactly, are these essential personnel? Let's say a company is conducting a raid, a mission for which FM 7-10 specifically requires a leader's reconnaissance, and for which ARTEP 7-10-MTP lists the leader's reconnaissance as a "critical task."

Considering the tasks assigned in the FM and the MTP, and on the basis of my own experience, a leader's reconnaissance for a raid might include the company commander, his battalion radio telephone operator (RTO), the three platoon leaders, a two-man surveillance team, a two-man security team, and a compassman. This group already consists of 11 men, and an entire light infantry scout platoon has only 18. Furthermore, the purpose of the reconnaissance invites even greater expansion. Other possible candidates for the reconnaissance would be a company RTO, a leader for each of the probable left and right security sections, and the engineer squad leader.

When I was a scout observer-controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center, I had a hard time convincing five-man